



College Access Work and Direct Admissions Update

Wendy Robinson, Assistant Commissioner
Aaron Salasek, Direct Admissions Coordinator

February 6, 2025 | Senate Higher Education Policy & Finance Committee

- Ensuring equitable access to all of Minnesota's quality post-secondary institutions is an essential part of OHE's Strategic Plan
- Access to post-secondary programs is critical to meeting Minnesota's attainment goal
- Ensuring equitable access requires:
 - Building awareness of Minnesota's post-secondary options
 - Providing information and support for students and families as they navigate the college exploration, admissions, selection, and financial aid processes
 - Working with k-12, higher education, and community stakeholders to identify barriers, opportunities for collaboration, and areas for increased support from the state

- Outreach to students and families:
 - Events include student success conferences, educational presentations with community organizations and high schools, and state-wide virtual information sessions through the Minnesota Goes to College network.
 - Examples: Fall 2024 Get Ready Student Conference (200 students), informational meeting with Move Forward (program for unhoused youth), and 2024 Native American College Fair (1,200 students from across MN)
- Outreach to K-12, college access, and higher ed staff:
 - Activities include
 - managing a state-wide newsletter about college-going activities and trainings,
 - providing logistical support to high schools who are offering college application and financial aid events for students
 - producing relevant print and digital materials about key college access topics like financial aid, scholarship, choosing a college, and more

- Lumina “Connect to College Grant”
 - Activities include college visits for high school students, regional counselor convenings, and creation of new materials related to financial aid and Direct Admissions
- Get Ready (GEAR UP grant funded through Department of Education)
 - Served approximately 7,500 students across 14 capacity-building schools and 28 additional schools statewide during last grant cycle
 - Activities include academic tutoring, career exploration, college visits, success coaching, support for completing admissions and financial aid applications
 - Professional development for high school staff
 - Outcomes:
 - Four out of seven partner schools saw increases in FAFSA completion rates
 - Five out of seven partner schools saw substantially increased college enrollment rates

- Ready, Set, FAFSA!
 - Virtual financial aid information series for students and families, we saw 1,300 unique registrations for the October series and 939 unique registrations for the January series
- Financial aid outreach to K-12 and college staff
 - OHE offers biannual virtual trainings on state financial aid programs, North Star Promise trainings, and community educational support around financial literacy
- FAFSA completion event support for students and families
 - Examples: Staffing the 2024 OHE state fair booth with financial aid professionals, virtual FAFSA completion events during summer 2024, and on-site event support for College Possible FAFSA beta testing in October 2024
 - Upcoming financial aid event planned on March 4th in Duluth, MN for greater Duluth area

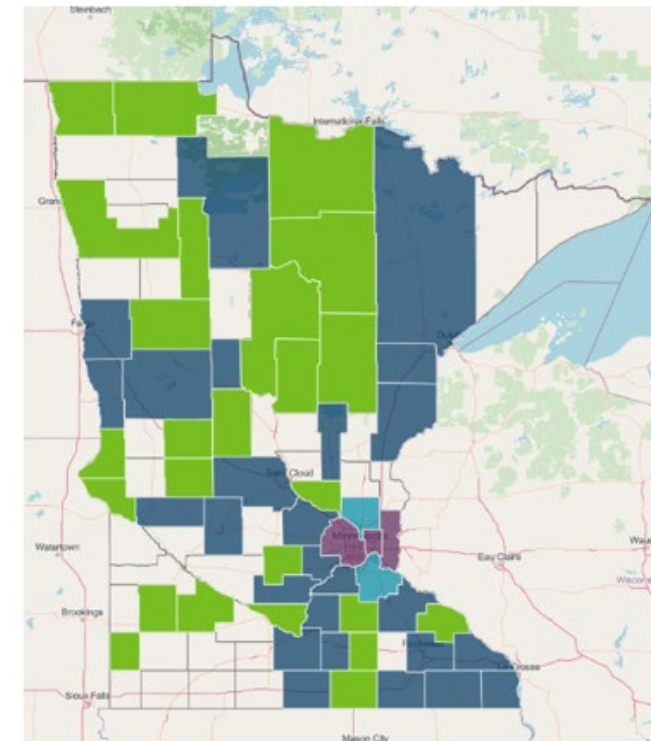
Direct Admissions: Overview

- Minnesota's pro-active admissions program
- The most comprehensive direct admissions model in the US
- Program goals:
 - Reduce anxiety around "will I get in?"
 - Close attainment gaps
 - Promote a college-going culture throughout the state
 - Increase the number of students enrolling in college immediately after high school
 - Show students that they have access to a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree if they choose to further their education
 - Increase the number of students staying in Minnesota for college
 - Connect students, families, and schools with colleges and universities earlier, giving families time to consider their options and plan
- Increase knowledge and awareness of options around college affordability to high school seniors

Direct Admissions: Program Overview

- Student can decide which school they want to attend based on those offers of admissions and then apply for free through waived application fees.
- There are 55 Minnesota colleges and universities participating, both public and private.
- The program continues to work toward full scale implementation.
 - Year 1: 46 high schools participating, representing 28 counties
 - Year 2: 120 high schools participating, representing 42 counties
 - Year 3: 182 high schools participating, representing 56 counties
- The program could benefit up to 32,224 high school seniors.
 - 45% of whom are students of color, and
 - 37% of whom are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals

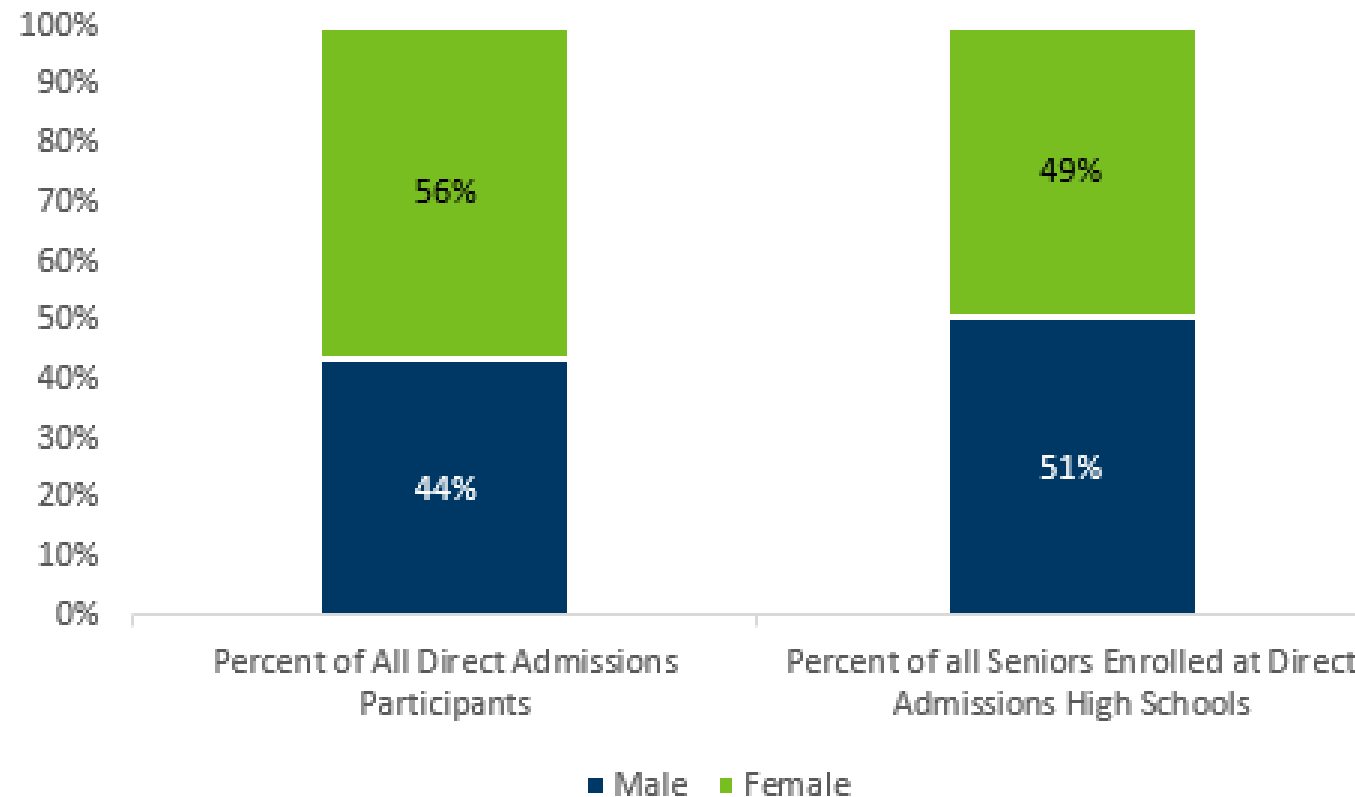
Figure 1. Participating Schools by County for Academic Year 2023-2024



- 2 to 5 Participating High Schools
- One Participating High School
- More than 10 Participating High Schools
- 5 to 10 Participating High Schools

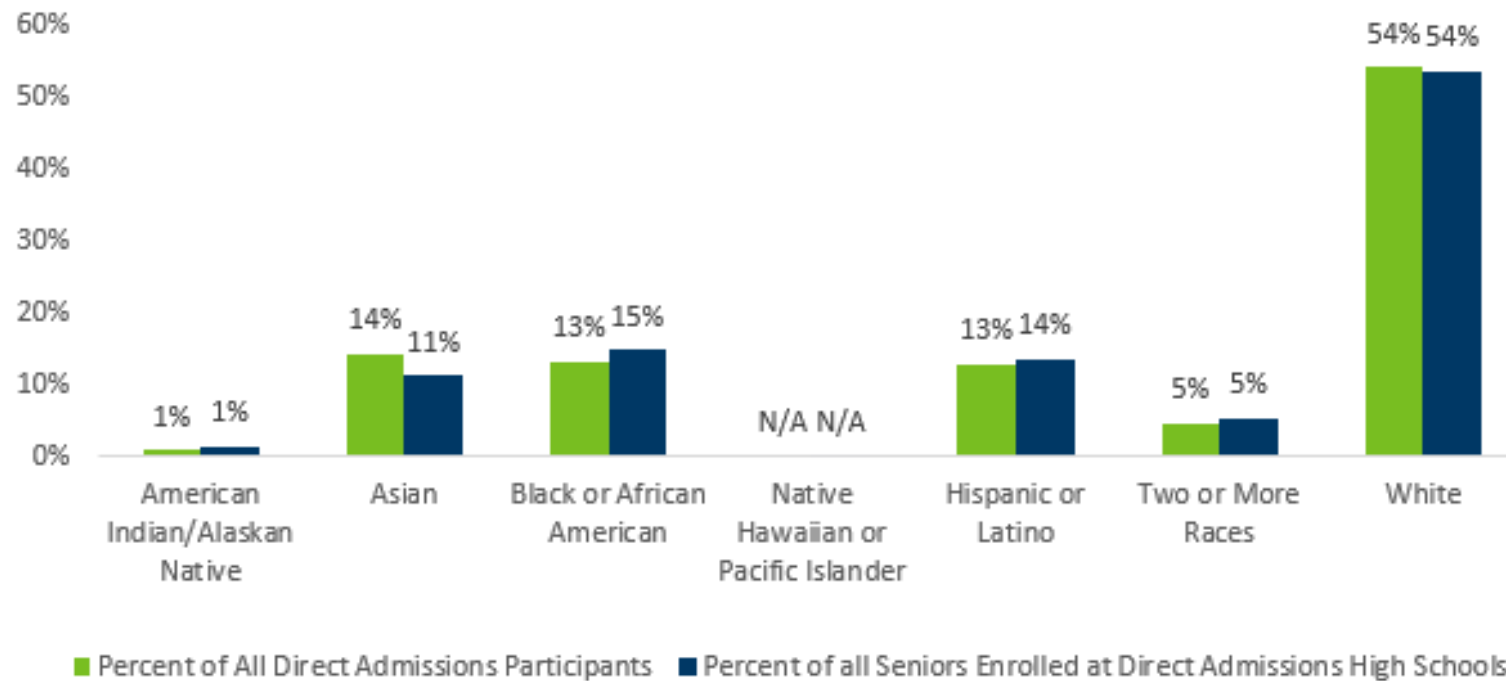
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 Student Demographics

Figure 2 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Sex 2023-2024



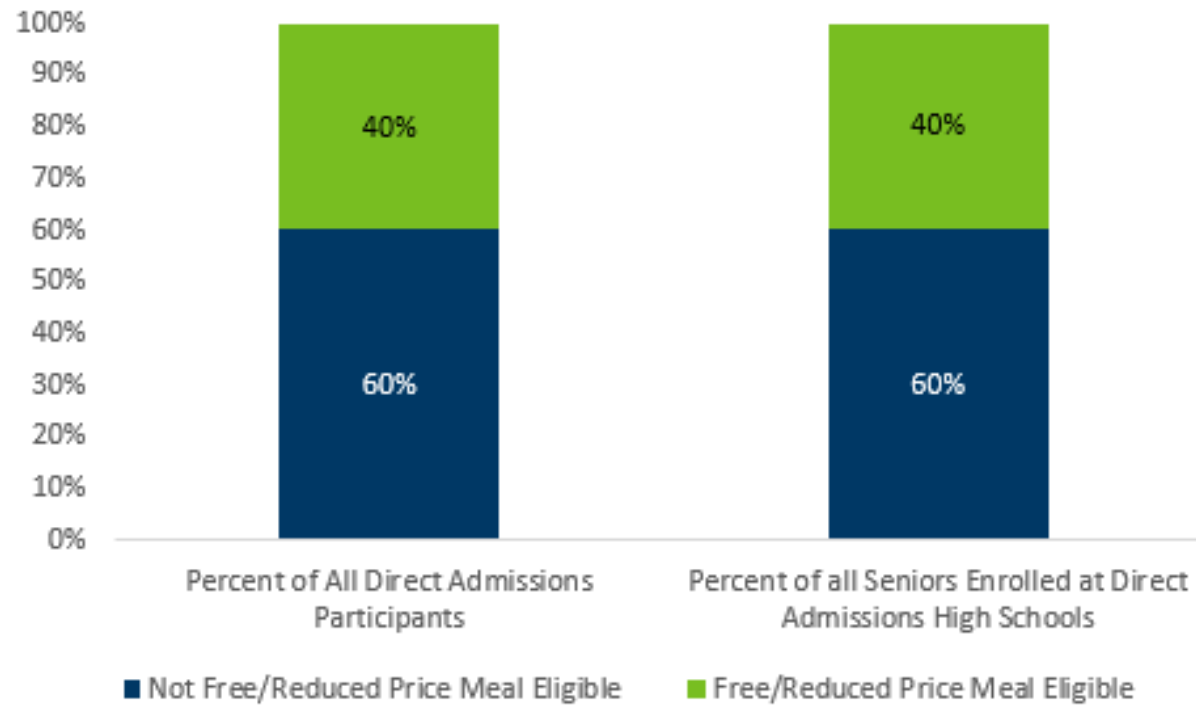
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 Student Demographics

Figure 3 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Race and Ethnicity 2023-2024



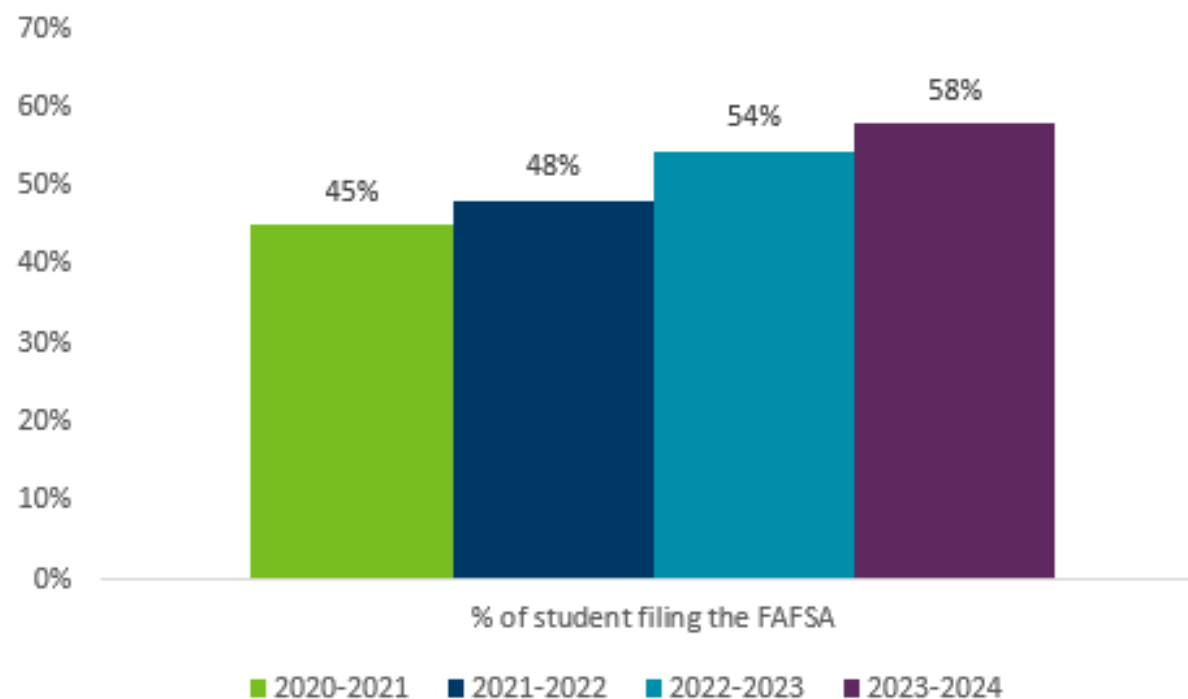
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 Student Demographics

Figure 4 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility 2023-2024



Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 FAFSA Completion

Figure 5 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time



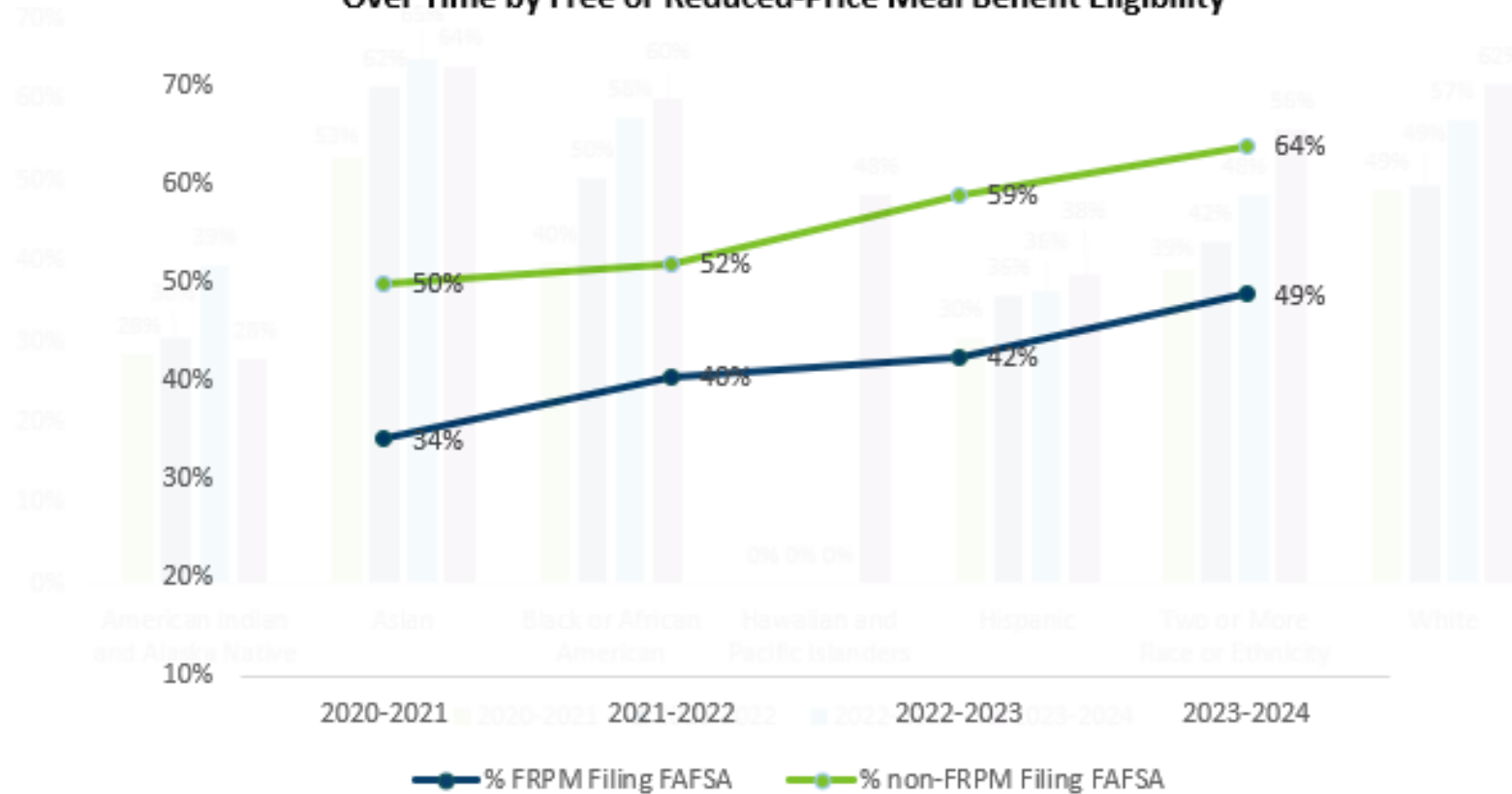
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 FAFSA Completion

Figure 7 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time by Race and Ethnicity



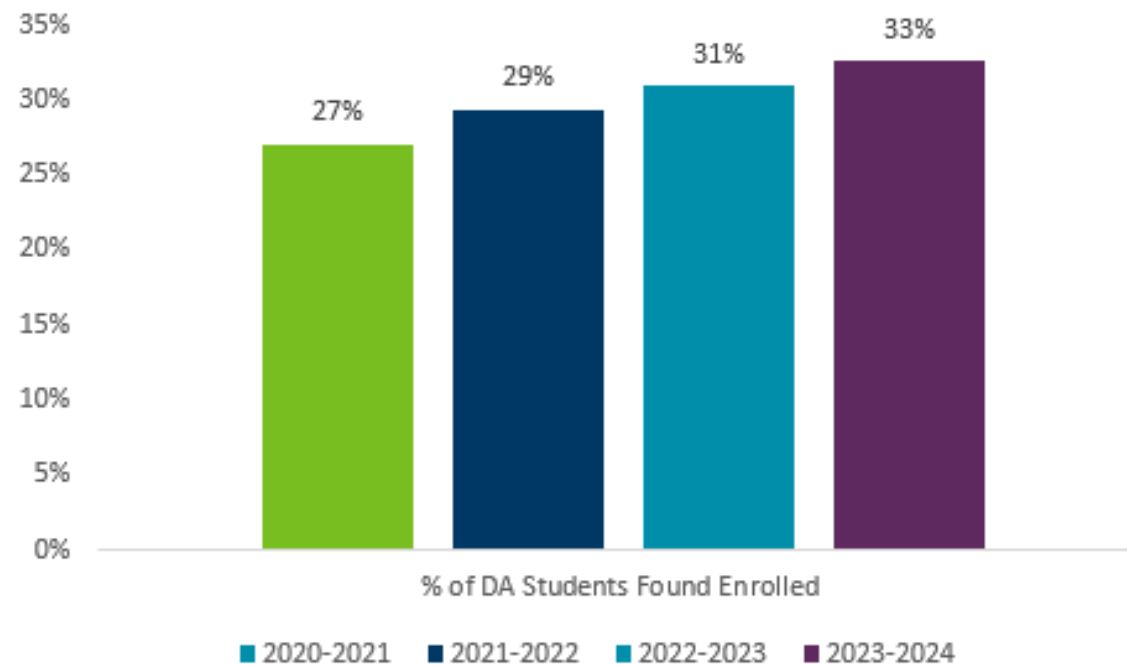
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 FAFSA Completion

Figure 8 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility



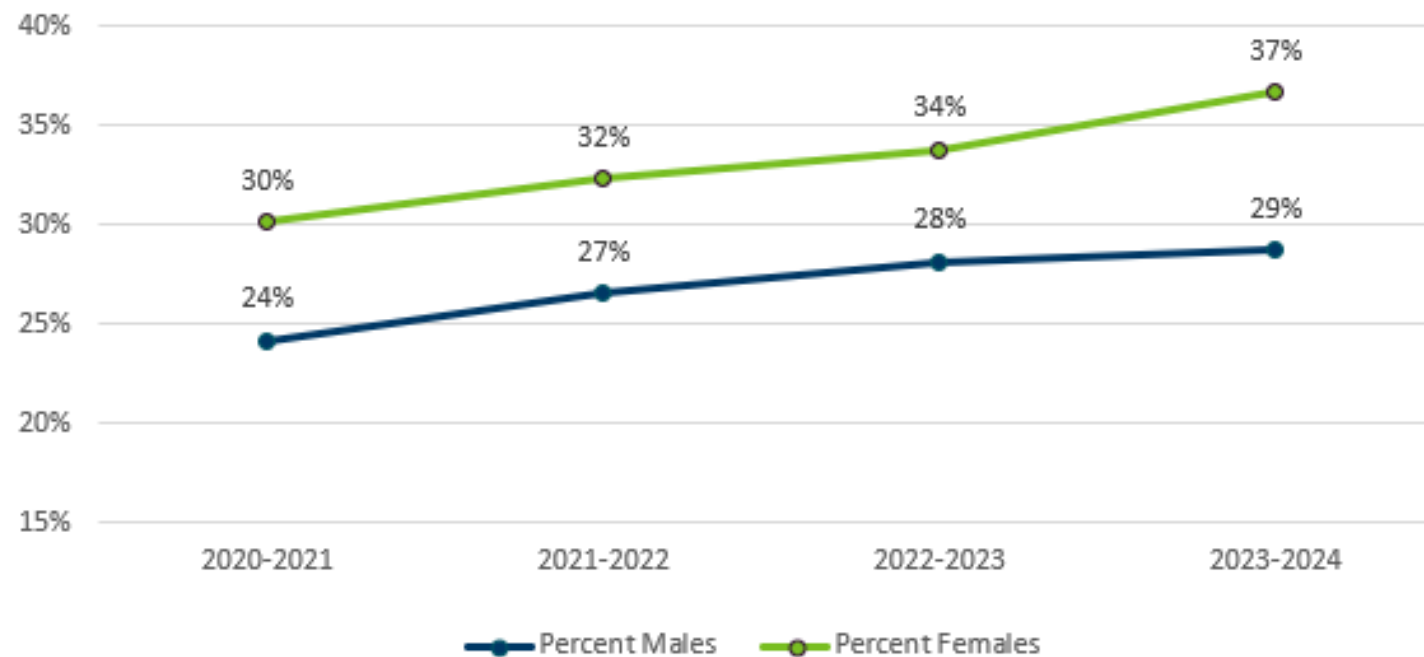
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 College Enrollment

Figure 9 Percentage of Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College Following High School Graduation (Preliminary Data) Over Time



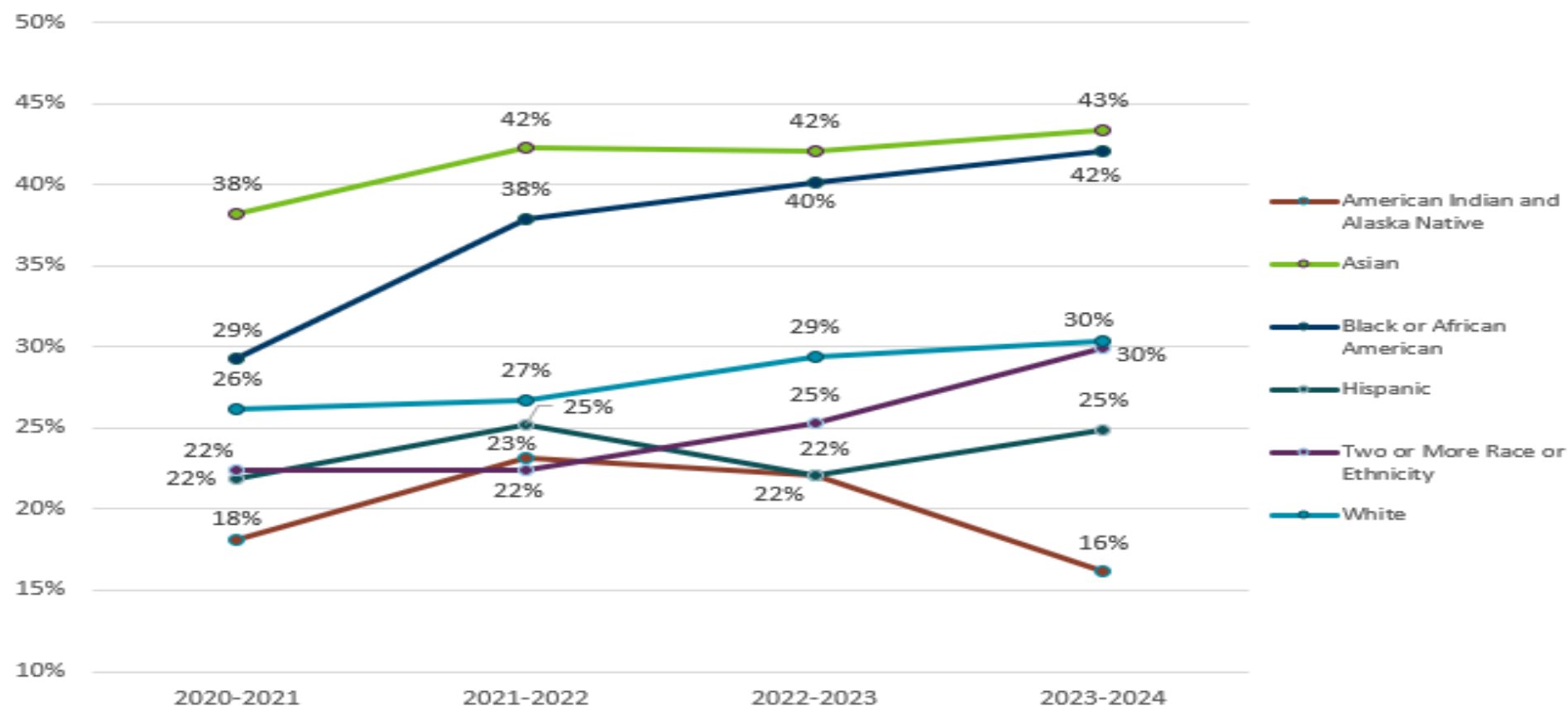
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 College Enrollment

Figure 10 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Sex



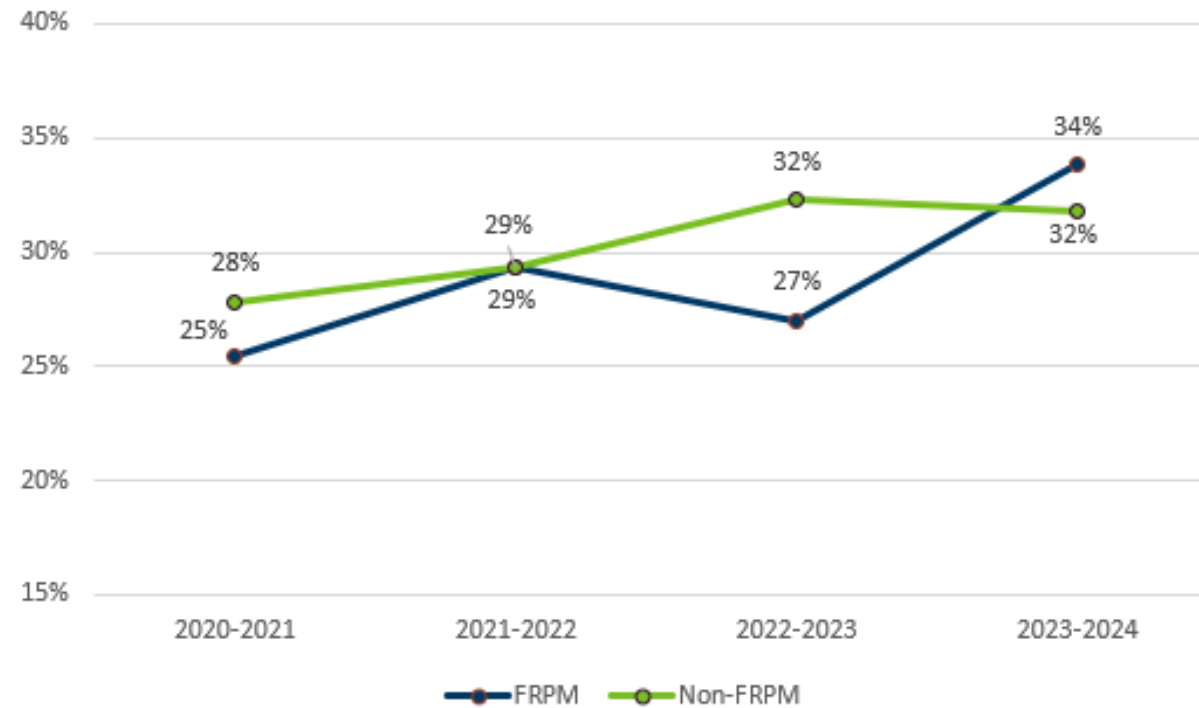
Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 College Enrollment

Figure 11 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Race and Ethnicity



Direct Admissions: 2023-2024 College Enrollment

Figure 12 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility



Direct Admissions: 2024-2025 Participating Cohort (*in progress*)

- For the current program year of 2024-2025:
 - 182 participating high schools enroll an estimated 31,172 senior students at 56 counties across the state.
 - Almost half of enrolled seniors (43%) at participating schools are Black, Indigenous, and students of color.
 - Over a third of enrolled seniors (36%) at participating schools are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- 100 high schools are located in the seven county Twin Cities region of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties.
- Among students enrolled in grade 12 at a participating high school in 2024-2025, 53% of students attended a school in the 7-county Twin Cities region.

Direct Admissions: 2024-2025 Participating Cohort (*in progress*)

- Data is still incoming, and so far as of January 31st, we have **168** high schools reporting.
 - 69 more school compared to this point in time last year
 - Last year's 2023-2024 cohort ended at 115.
- We've received **47,629** requests for proactive admission from **7,314** students.
 - In terms of requests for proactive admission, this is 16,126 more than 1/25/2024,
 - Last year's 2023-2024 cohort ended at 34,751
 - The median number of selections in last year's cohort was four responses for proactive admission. Of all students responding, 85% chose ten or less institutions to request proactive admission to, and 18% chose only one institution.
 - For number of unduplicated students taking advantage of the program, this number is 2,802 more than 1/25/2024, and last year's cohort 2023-2024 ended at 4,975.
- *Report "census date" is January 17th, 2025.*

Direct Admissions: 2024-2025 Student Demographics (*in progress*)

Table 1. Number of Enrolled Seniors at Direct Admissions Participating High Schools by Race and Ethnicity, 2024-2025

Race and Ethnicity	Count of Enrolled Seniors	Percent of Total Enrolled Seniors
Black or African American	4,229	14%
American Indian or Native American (Federal Definition)	902	3%
Asian	2,932	10%
Hispanic or Latino	3,972	13%
White	17,449	56%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	0%
Two or More Races	1,473	5%
Unreported	179	1%
Total	31,172	100%

Note: Counts based on reported enrollment at end of students' junior year in June 2024 provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

Direct Admissions: 2024-2025 Student Demographics (*in progress*)

Table 2. Number of Enrolled Seniors at Direct Admissions Participating High Schools by Free and Reduced-Price Meals, 2024-2025

Free and Reduced-Price Meals	Count of Enrolled Seniors	Percent of Total Enrolled Seniors
No	19,914	64%
Yes	11,258	36%
Total	31,172	100%

Note: Counts based on reported enrollment at end of students' junior year in June 2024 provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

2024-2025 College Enrollment *(in progress)*

Table 3. Number of Student Admissions Requests via Direct Admissions by Sector, 2024-2025

Sector	Count of Admissions	Percent of Admissions
	Requests	Requests
Minnesota State 2-Year Colleges	17,850	38%
Minnesota State Universities	9,427	20%
University of Minnesota	5,526	12%
Private Colleges and Universities	13,481	29%
Tribal Colleges	621	1%
I am not interested in direct admissions	253	0%
Total	47,158	100%

2024-2025 College Enrollment (*in progress*)

Table 4. Number of Students Requesting Direct Admissions by Academic Tier, 2024-2025

Academic Tier	Unweighted Grade Point Average (4.0 scale; must include Pass/No Pass Grades)	Course Grades: Math, English, and Science Courses Taken in 10 th and 11 th Grades	Number of Colleges Selecting this Academic Tier	Unduplicated Count of Students Requesting Direct Admissions	Percent of Total Students Requesting Direct Admissions
1	Less than 2.50 GPA	No course grade requirements	28	1,204	17%
2	2.50-2.74	No course grade requirements	8	493	7%
3	2.75-2.99	No course grade requirements	5	306	4%
4	2.75-2.99	C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas	1	335	5%
5	3.00-4.00	No course grade requirements	13	1,950	27%
6	3.50-4.00	C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas	1	2,938	41%
All	n/a	n/a	55	7,226	100%

Direct Admissions: Looking Forward

- Continue to scale:
 - Add 100 additional high schools to the upcoming year's cohort of participants, bringing the number of participating high schools to around 300 in 2025-2026,
 - Continue to incorporate private/parochial high schools who have interest in the program.
 - Broaden alternative learning centers/program, online high school, tribal affiliated, and competency-based high schools' participation;
- Continue to make program more streamline for both K-12 and college partners through technology enhancements and program simplification where possible
- Continue to build a broader Direct Admissions community including collaborations with college access groups, foundations, and other interested stakeholders
- Continue to strengthen messages around importance of financial aid and value of Minnesota opportunities

Questions?



Direct Admissions Minnesota

Your higher education journey starts with Direct Admissions

The Direct Admissions program is designed to make sure you know that you have multiple college options in the state. With Direct Admissions, you no longer have to wonder "will I get in?" because you will be proactively notified of which participating colleges and universities you are accepted to - before you even apply! This fall, you will receive a letter that lists the participating colleges and universities that are ready to admit you based on your academic records. This communication will outline your next steps, so you can secure admission to the right school for you.

Our goal:

We want all Minnesota graduating seniors to know that you have multiple college options in the state! Whether you want to attend a four-year university, two-year community college, trade school or technical college, there are many short-term and long-term postsecondary possibilities participating in Direct Admissions.

Student Checklist:

To take full advantage of the Direct Admissions program, use the checklist to stay on track!

OCTOBER OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR

Receive and review your Direct Admissions communication: Be ready! You will receive a hard copy and digital copy of your Direct Admissions letter, which will list all the colleges that you are receiving Direct Admission to.

Select your institutions: In your digital letter, select which colleges and universities you would like to receive Direct Admission to. Submit the letter back to your high school, then complete the application portal. Depending on the institutions selected, you will receive your official acceptance letters! Some institutions will request more information, so watch your email inbox for next steps.

FALL TO SPRING OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR

Explore your options: Determine the best fit for you! Visit MyHigherEd.mn.gov and use the college search tool to compare your choices according to college profiles, program options, institution size, tuition and much more.

Complete FAFSA and explore financial aid options: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the most important step that you can take to pay for college. Maximize your chances to receive grants, scholarships, and other financial aid. You can also connect with your school counselor to ensure you are on track for graduation and identify school scholarships and grants to apply for.

Make your final decision: Commit to your next steps! After considering all your options, you should confirm your fall enrollment with your desired college.



Direct Admissions AT A GLANCE

"Direct Admissions" means a student has gained conditional or guaranteed admittance to a college or university, depending on the institution.

Students must complete the college's application (fees waived) and submit additional information to officially confirm their admittance to the colleges of their choice.

Participating Institutions

- 120+ participating high schools
- 23,000+ participating seniors
- 55+ colleges and universities - includes technical schools, tribal colleges, community colleges, four-year public and private universities

Scan the QR
code for more
information:



You are college ready.

You have options.

Minnesota colleges and universities
are ready to welcome you next fall.

APPLY FOR FREE

It is FREE to apply to the colleges and universities participating in Direct Admissions

Paying for college

There are many options that can help you plan how to pay for college and minimize your overall costs!

Complete the FAFSA

We strongly encourage you to apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or MN Dream Act, which is used to determine eligibility for financial aid. The federal Pell Grant and the Minnesota State Grant provide grants to more than 120,000 students each year. Half of all students who apply receive a Pell Grant or Minnesota State Grant! Grants are based on the cost of the college chosen, family size, and income.

Where do I start?

The federal Student Aid website (studentaid.gov) is where you start to complete your FAFSA. For undocumented students, complete the MN Dream Act (www.ohs.state.mn.us/MNDreamAct).

In addition, check out the financial aid section of each college or university you are interested in. Find out more information about their deadlines and application process for scholarships and other types of college funded aid.

Frequently Asked Questions

How did I get selected for the colleges and universities on my list?

You are offered Direct Admission to the colleges and universities on your list based on your current GPA and the courses you have completed by the end of your junior year. Colleges and universities pre-select admissions criteria tiers to determine which students they want to offer Direct Admission to.

Do I still need to take a placement/standardized test like ACT or SAT?

While many colleges and universities participating in the Direct Admissions program do not require students to submit ACT or SAT scores, students should still consult the website of their top choice institutions to find out more about their current testing recommendations. You may be asked to submit ACT or SAT scores, if required by the institution.

Do I still need to complete an admissions application?

Yes! The Direct Admissions program lets you know your options for institutions that are committed to admitting you, but you must complete an admissions application to secure a spot. Remember - your applications will be free! Once you submit your digital letter back to your high school, you will complete an online application portal. Be sure to provide an alternate email address (other than your school account) and watch your email inbox. The colleges and universities that you select will provide your next steps.

What if I already applied to colleges or universities on my list? Will this affect my application?

No need to worry about any applications you may have already submitted! Your application will still be processed and there is no need to re-apply. Please note that if you've already submitted an application fee, it will not be refunded.

I don't see the name of a college that I'm interested in on this letter. Does that mean I can't be admitted there?

Some colleges and universities chose not to opt-in to the Direct Admissions program, so you may not see a college you are interested in on your list. If there are other colleges you are interested in, you'll want to apply through their standard admissions processes.

Read more FAQs at www.ohs.state.mn.us/directadmissions